Tamil Nadu Graffiti - Arrow symbols indicate the god Rudra.

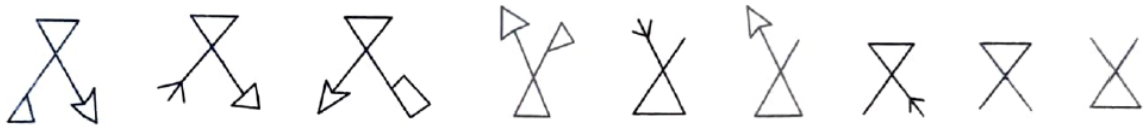


Figure 1Karkida symbols with arrows merged. Picture courtesy Rajan. (1)

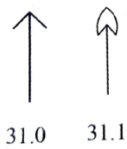
The picture above shows the karkida symbols with arrow symbols. Karkida means crab. Karkida month is celebrated as the month of worship of ancestors in Kerala. Read the article for more information. God of karkida month is Rudra. Rudra's arrows cause injury and death. Rudra was the most worshipped god in IVC. Read the article "Rudra was the most important god of the Indus Valley civilisation" for more information. (2)

Please observe the above symbols keenly. It can be seen that the arrow symbol is merged with the karkida symbol. This is quite logical because Rudra is the god associated with the rituals held in this month. Reference page no. 101, Book of Rajan. (1) The above picture is graffiti from the Hyderabad region.

Again, these ligatures are from the Hyderabad region, as mentioned in the same reference above. (1) These ligatures feature an arrow within the symbol of the sky, representing heaven. This arrow could have indicated the god Rudra in heaven. At the same time, there is a possibility that this arrow could be a hand symbol indicating Ka (soul), which is reaching heaven.

This ligature requires some more discussion. Gurumurthy says it resembles a face—see page 56 of Gurumurthy's book. (3) But I beg to differ with his interpretation. In my opinion, it resembles an arrow in the sky. Or soul ascending to heaven. This shows the varied nature of interpretations. The interpretation depends on the idea of individual persons' minds. However, these graffiti marks should be interpreted in the context of the place where the artifacts were found. These pot graffiti are from funeral pots. Hence, something related to death and heaven is a reasonably expected idea from such markings.

The symbols mentioned above are from the Hyderabad region, as referenced. (1) All these symbols indicate the arrows and bow and arrows. This symbol, featuring a bow and arrow, is the trademark of the god Rudra. This suggests that the ancient Hindu deity Rudra was worshipped in the Hyderabad region in ancient times. Now, we have to verify the status of Rudra in ancient Tamil Nadu.



These arrow symbols are from kodumanal pottery graffiti.

It shows that God Rudra was also present in Kodumanal, Erode district.

The graffiti above is from Kodumanal, as referenced on page 129 of the book by Rajan. The symbol referenced under number 54.1 depicts a sacrificial pot with an arrow inside. It means that the blood sacrifice was done to please the god Rudra. The symbol referenced under number 54.2 depicts an arrow symbol positioned beneath the sky symbol. The sky symbol indicates heaven. This conclusively shows that the god Rudra was also present in ancient Tamil Nadu.

Although the arrow symbols are visible in Kodumanal graffiti, they are not as prevalent as in the IVC symbol. Likely, Rudra was not the top god of the ancient Tamil people; only the mountain god Varuna, associated with Geb, was a significant deity among the Tamil people. It again confirms the limited influence of Vedic ideas in Tamil country.

References

1. **Rajan., K.** *Thonmai Tamizh Iyal (in Tamil).* Chennai : International Institute of Tamil Studies., 2018.

2. **Jeyakumar(Rudra).** Rudra was the most important god of the Indus Valley Civilization. *www.academia.edu.* [Online] https://www.academia.edu/43654003/Rudra_was_the_most_important_god_of_Indus_Valley_Civilization.

3. **Gurumurthy .S.** *Deciphering the Inus script.* Chennai. : University of Madras, Chennai., 1999.